

Hereford FC Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure

Safeguarding Policy Statement

Hereford FC is fully committed to ensuring the club is inclusive and provides a safe and positive experience for all participants, regardless of age, gender, gender reassignment, disability, culture, language, race, faith, belief or sexual orientation. Hereford FC expects everyone in the club to share this commitment.

Hereford Football Club will ensure the safety and protection of all vulnerable adults involved in its activities through adherence to the safeguarding guidelines adopted by the club.

Policy Aims

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibilities of everyone involved in the club in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse. Its key objectives are:

- To explain the responsibilities that everyone involved in the club has in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults
- To provide an overview of vulnerable adult protection
- To provide clear procedures that must be implemented when vulnerable adult protection issues arise

It is hoped that the law, The FA's Respect programme, The FA's Equality Policy and positive approaches to training and education are sufficient to safeguard all adults in football, Hereford FC recognises that it has a responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults from abuse and harm and to respond where abuse and harm are perceived to have occurred in any of its activities.

This policy will seek to provide guidance as to how to prevent harm, give clarity on how to report harm, to ensure investigation into abuse or harm and respond to the outcome of such investigations in such a way as to reduce the risk of further harm to the individual vulnerable adult and to other vulnerable adults who may be affected in the future.

Hereford FC recognises that the terms 'Vulnerable Adult', 'abuse' and 'harm' are open to interpretation and challenge but for this policy they will be defined as follows:

'A person aged 18 or over who is or who may need community care services because of mental or other disability, age or illness: and who is or who may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation'.

In this context community care services include all care services provided in any setting by any agency (statutory, voluntary or community)

This may include a person who:

- is elderly or frail
- has a mental illness
- has dementia
- has a physical or sensory disability
- has a learning disability
- is a substance misuser
- is homeless

Abuse/Harm is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' report suggests the following as the main types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse** including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Bullying involves situations where people deliberately abuse physically, emotionally or verbally. Bullying can take place anywhere but is more likely to take place where there is inadequate supervision.
- **Financial abuse** including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Institutional abuse** including the inappropriate use of power and control both on the person and their possessions, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, lack of individual care and disrespect.
- **Discriminatory abuse** including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Safe Recruitment

Hereford Football Club endorses and adopts The FA's Responsible Recruitment guidelines for recruiting volunteers who come into contact with vulnerable adults and the club will where appropriate:

- specify what the role is and what tasks it involves
- request identification documents
- as a minimum meet and chat with the applicant(s) and where possible interview people before appointing them
- ask for and follow up with 2 references before appointment
- where eligible require an FA accepted Enhanced DBS Check in line with current FA policy and regulations.

Everyone who works or volunteers with vulnerable adults is strongly encouraged to complete the FA's free online Safeguarding for Vulnerable Adults course.

If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an individual who is already involved or who has approached the club to become part of it, guidance will be sought from The Football Association. It is noted and accepted that The FA will consider the relevance and significance of the information obtained via the DBS Process and that all suitability decisions will be made in accordance with legislation and in the best interests of vulnerable adults.

Hereford Football Club has appointed a Club Welfare Officer in line with The FA's role profile and required completion of the Safeguarding Children and Welfare Officers Workshop. The Club Welfare Officer is the first point of contact regarding concerns about the welfare of any vulnerable adult. The Club Welfare Officer will liaise directly with the County FA (CFA) Welfare Officer and will be familiar with the procedures for referring any concerns. They will also play a proactive role in increasing awareness of Respect, poor practice and abuse amongst everyone involved in the club.

Hereford Football Club acknowledges and endorses The FA's identification of bullying as a category of abuse. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable at the club. If bullying does occur, everyone should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. Incidents need to be reported to the Club Welfare Officer, in cases of serious bullying the County FA Welfare Officer may be contacted. Respect codes of conduct for Players, Parents/ Spectators, Officials and Coaches have been implemented by Hereford Football Club. In order to validate these Respect codes of conduct the club has clear actions it will take regarding repeated or serious misconduct at club level and acknowledges the possibility of potential sanctions which may be implemented by the County FA in more serious circumstances.

Hereford Football Club Safeguarding Procedures

It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given, as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

Responding to an allegation

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Hereford FC Club Welfare Officer on that working day where possible. If it is urgent or life threatening, ring 999 without delay. It must be understood that in alerting or raising a concern about abuse you are not being asked to verify or prove that the information provided is true. The responsibility in establishing if a crime has taken place, lies with the police.

The Club Welfare Officer shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local adult social services duty social worker. Further details of who to contact including phone numbers can be found at the end of this document.

Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen and observe
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure

- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your Club Welfare Officer for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation

DONT

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred.

This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the Club Welfare Officer.

Confidentiality

Vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality, which should be clearly understood by all.

All personal information regarding a vulnerable adult will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.

If an adult confides in a member of staff or volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the adult sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

Within that context, the adult should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent should be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.

Where a disclosure has been made, the person made aware of it should let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.

The adults' involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

Role of Club Welfare Officer

Included in the role of the Club Welfare Officer is to deal with all instances involving adult protection that arise within Hereford FC. They will respond to all vulnerable adult protection concerns and enquiries. The designated Club Welfare Officer is Ruth Walkden

Should you have any suspicions or concerns relating to Adult Protection, contact her (details below). In the event of her being uncontactable, alternative contacts are available at the end of this document.

Local Contacts

Full contact details are given below.

- In an emergency, dial 999 for either police or ambulance
- Hereford FC Club Welfare Officer, rwalkden@herefordfc.co.uk phone 07711 594932. (Please leave a message if not picked up)
- Herefordshire FA Designated Welfare Officer - anna.thomasson@herefordshirefa.com phone 0755 5754314
- Adult Social Services, safeguarding@herefordshire.gov.uk phone 01432 260715. Office hours only Mon- Fri
- Out of Hours (Emergency Duty team), 0330 1239309 (At all other times)
- Police, out of hours non-emergency 101